

The shades are drawn
in the red brick
above these storefronts. You

may see the hand
that lets them up. The hand with arm
at the window, or

later, a woman in white
with hat, pop
out of the doorway and stand,

smelling the chalk cement, pigeon
droppings, damp canvas
awnings, yawn

and turning to her right, click
down the street like a tongue
against the roof of a mouth.

Line Drawing

You fold your head
and arm across the table

like a wing drawn in
or like a grounded kite You

are a Scandanavian Indian listening
to horses distant in the wood

Your cheekbones are so high
they form a butterfly

in the air under your eyes And
when you smile he lights up

and your eyes close like the happy
Chinese ancestor I never had

Girl Sitting Alone At A Party

You have forced your body
into a chair as if insulted.
And now you cock
your head like a bird challenging
a worm already dead. Lips
as officious as a government

seal. You hold
your knee as if it were the thing
blushing, and it will be
when you move your hand. You
are so sad: under your chair
the chrome legs make a cross
in the air like fingers
across your heart.

-- Robert L McRoberts

Bristol RI

The Mixologist

Jamal asked about my father

he was born on a farm
and lived with his
eight brothers and sisters
until he was thirteen
and ran away with a small circus
where he followed elephants
around the center ring
then became a clown and juggler

years later he almost married
a woman who swung from a trapeze
by her teeth but he could see how
their life together would be

Jamal asked what happened --
how did he end up in the city
painting houses
and grinning shyly
(hiding his bad teeth)
when at sixty-two a newspaper
printed his picture mixing paint

I told her I didn't know

Wash Out

it rained so hard last night
I almost became a Jehovah's witness

water poured in between the ribs
of the patched roof